**Name**

**Date**

**Hour**

**Teacher**

***The Circuit* Discussion Questions**

**Directions: Answer the following questions in complete sentences.**

**Chapter 1: “Under the Wire” (pages 1-7)**

1. What does California represent to Francisco and his family? How do you know? (Give an example to support.)
2. What can you infer about the family’s economic state, based on their belongings, living conditions, etc?
3. Imagine you are Francisco. How would you feel crawling through the hole beneath the wire fence?

**Chapter 2: “Soledad” (pages 8-11)**

1. Discuss what you think the author is trying to convey about the migrant family.
2. Identify Papá’s response after Francisco mixes dirt with the cotton bolls. Interpret what this tells you about his father’s values/the values of the migrant family.
3. Compare your life with Francisco’s. What’s the same? What’s different? (Write at least a paragraph.)

**Chapter 3: “Inside Out” (pages 12-21)**

1. Evaluate the following scenarios:

How would Francisco’s experience at school change…

…if he had been able to speak freely in Spanish?

…if he had been able to talk to Arthur more?

…if he had a teacher who spoke Spanish (at least a few words here and there)?

1. What does Francisco’s giving his drawing away to Curtis say about Francisco (i.e. examine his character)?

**Chapter 4: “Miracle in Tent City” (pages 22-35)**

1. “One person’s trash is another’s person’s treasure” is a saying we use all the time in English. List some “trash” (at least 3 items) that the family takes and describe how they turn it into something useful.
2. Francisco says he had to repeat first grade because he did not know English.

Defend why you think this is fair or why you think this is unfair.

Do you think he would have passed if he had been taught in Spanish? Why or why not? Select some reasons to support your opinion.

What do you think could have been done to help him pass?

Various schools of thought exist regarding the education of English Language Learners. Some educators believe schools today should teach in English only. Others believe in bilingual classrooms, where students are taught in both English and Spanish until they learn the language. Still others believe they should separate Spanish speakers from English because they need more help. What is your view of the topic? Choose one of the three or create your own, just make sure you defend your position adequately and appropriately.

1. Torito becomes sick and almost dies. At one point, Mamá says that the family doesn’t have the money to pay for a hospital visit. In our country (and world) today, there is a great deal of talk about “universal healthcare.” This means that every citizen – and there is even talk about everyone, citizen or non-citizen – would receive healthcare, regardless of their job situation or their decision to obtain healthcare. Basically, it’s a “womb to tomb” mentality. The government takes care of people from birth to death if/when they get sick.

Should every citizen receive medical care from the government, should it be an individual’s decision to pay for healthcare and what type, or should the government essentially force individuals to pay into the universal healthcare system? Why?

And what about non-citizens: should they receive medical care if they are sick and living here?

**Chapter 5: “El Angel de Oro” (pages 36-41)**

1. Imagine you are Francisco and you realize your friend Miguelito has just moved. Write at least a paragraph describing your feelings.
2. A symbol is something (often an object or character) that means/represents something more. For example, a cross could symbolize Christianity, a dog could symbolize loyalty, the American flag could symbolize freedom/the U.S., etc. What do you think are symbols in this chapter? Pick one and write what you believe it means and why.

**Chapter 6: “Christmas Gift” (pages 42-46)**

1. Think of Papá’s actions in this chapter. Choose 1 word to describe him and develop a paragraph to justify your answer. Use examples, details, etc. (from this chapter and/or others) to support your point.
2. Create a list of ideas to help a family/families in need. Think of what resources you need. How could you help your plan come to fruition? In other words, how can you “make it happen”?
3. Do you think people who live in poverty are less successful than people who live in abundance (or even wealth)? Why or why not? Write at least a paragraph.

**Chapter 7: “Death Forgiven” (pages 47-50)**

1. Has your attitude of Papá in this chapter changed from the last chapter? How would you describe him now? Write a paragraph.
2. Authors are deliberate in choosing certain stories to include in their works. Why would Francisco Jiménez even include this chapter about a pet parrot? What’s the point of it? Write a paragraph describing your view.

**Chapter 8: “Cotton Sack” (pages 51-60)**

1. Are Francisco and Roberto too young to work in the fields? Why or why not? Give reasons to support.

Are children too young to work in the fields now-a-days? Why or why not? Give reasons to support.

1. How would it affect their lives and their family members’ lives if they were not allowed to work?
2. Does Francisco deserve a cotton sack? Why or why not? What do you think he has to do to earn it?

**Chapter 9: “The Circuit” (pages 61-69)**

1. Based on this chapter and your own prior knowledge, what do you think the word *circuit* means? Write your answer below.

Once you have predicted its meaning, look the word up in a dictionary. There will be several meanings. Which one do you think best fits and why? Write the definition and your explanation below.

Why do you believe that the author chose to use this chapter’s name as the title for his book?

1. Constants (i.e. things that remain the same) are few and far between in Francisco’s life (besides moving all the time). However, this chapter does give a few objects (two in particular) that seem to stay with the family as they move. What are those objects and what do they symbolize?

Can you find any other constants in Francisco’s life in this chapter or others?

1. Oftentimes in schools today, classes that are not core subjects are eliminated due to budget cuts. How do you think non-core subjects such as music, art, woodshop, mechanics, etc. benefit English Language Learners (and students in general)?
2. Analyze how Mr. Lema is different from the other teacher Francisco had. Please write at least a paragraph.

**Chapter 10: “Learning the Game” (pages 70-79)**

1. Francisco learns some very valuable life lessons in this chapter from the situations with Gabriel and Carlos. Pick a few aspects, and in a few paragraphs, describe what he learns. You may want to pick a few words that represent the values he learns in order to organize your thoughts.
2. Can you think of any other individuals in history who were mistreated (like Gabriel) and why they were mistreated?

**Chapter 11: “To Have and to Hold” (pages 80-93)**

1. How is the history of the Mexican people preserved in Francisco’s family? In other words, how do the children learn about it? How did their parents learn about it?

Do you think this manner of preservation works? Is it accurate? Why or why not?

1. What does this chapter demonstrate about knowledge and education? Think of Francisco’s librito, his pennies, the fire, the gumball incident, etc.

**Chapter 12: “Moving Still” (94-111)**

1. How will a year-round job for Roberto change the family’s lives?

Do you think that too much pressure is put on Roberto, as the oldest, since Papá is injured? Have you or someone you know ever had a great deal of responsibility expected of you? How did you or the individual handle it?

1. “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. – That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed…”

When the writers of the Declaration of Independence wrote the document, do you think they believed “all men” applied literally to all people?

Does the Declaration of Independence apply today? To whom does it apply? Citizens? Non-citizens? Both? Explain why.

1. Create a list of ideas to help Francisco and his family return to the United States.